Practicum in Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures
Instructor: Dr. Arijit Sen, Architecture and Urban Studies; Meeting Times: Spring 2018, Wednesdays 1:30-4:10 PM at AUP 183; Office Hours: By Appointment.

Course Description: This course is about reading the ordinary built environment (that includes everyday buildings, landscapes, material objects, and urban places) as cultural artifact. By focusing on the material world this course expands our methods of historical inquiry beyond the analysis of written records, texts, biographies, art, photography, and folklore. Primarily borrowing from material culture studies this course adapts methods and theories used in sub-fields such as environmental history, cultural landscape studies, and public history. Students will read examples of research from these fields.

Field application and field work is central to the way we learn. Theories and methods used in the field will be applied during the analysis of real buildings, landscapes, and cultures. (That is why this course is called a practicum). In-class workshops will focus on methods of data collection such as archival work, spatial analysis, mapping, interviewing and participant observation, and secondary research based off aggregate and published data sources.

The final weeks focus on emerging themes and concepts that frame current scholarship of buildings, landscapes, and cultures. There will be a hands-on, semester-long assignment that shadows the readings and class discussions: Here the students are asked to define how the term “environmental justice” relates to life in the neighborhoods of Washington Park and Sherman Park. This project is part of a national initiative around migration, environmental justice, and climate justice. For more details see, https://www.humanitiesactionlab.org/migrationandenvironmentaljustice

How we learn: Reading and Discussions: Every week, each student will produce three questions for in-class discussions. These questions will be based on the weekly readings (approx. 150 pages) and will critically examine 1) theory, 2) epistemology and 3) narrative frames or recurring themes. The class time will be used to discuss readings and questions.
Workshops: The last hour of the seminar will be devoted to workshops around writing, researching, analyzing, and interpreting data for the semester assignment.
Assignment: Students are assigned to research a case study around environmental justice in the Washington Park and Sherman Park neighborhoods of Milwaukee.

Learning objectives: This course is a graduate level theory/methods/application course. Students are expected to demonstrate an expert level of comprehension and learning in the following ways:
1. Demonstrate an ability to employ and apply difficult theoretical concepts from multiple disciplinary domains.
2. Demonstrate an advanced ability to create new knowledge and re-interpret existing knowledge.
3. Demonstrate an ability to read, evaluate, and interpret the built environment as cultural artifact; uncover the ideological and symbolic underpinnings of the material world.
4. Take an informed critical position on environmental justice within the built environment.

Evaluation: 30% In class participation, regular attendance, completing assigned readings, leading discussions and sharing ideas, intellectual curiosity, taking intellectual risks, suspending disbelief and trying out ideas that are different
20% Student presentations and book reviews, showing growth and regular progress during the semester, displaying motivation and intellectual curiosity

50% weekly and final projects, quality and standards

To be successful, it is necessary to be flexible, self-critical and always be ready to reevaluate and reconsider alternative perspectives, intentions, and positions than your own. This course encourages you to develop intellectual curiosity, take intellectual risks, and suspend disbelief while trying out ideas that are different and alien.

Grades are based on the following categories:

1. Your sense of curiosity, commitment to reading, and willingness to be deal with the unexpected. These qualities will be evaluated by your actions, writings, and speech.
2. Clarity of your process, methods, goals, and evidence of success as demonstrated by your visual and written forms of representation.

The “A” (4 points) grade indicates work of sustained excellence – work that demonstrates a high degree of technical quality, creativity and critical inquiry. The “B” (3 points) grade indicates work of significantly better than competent quality – work than demonstrates above average technical skills, creativity and critical engagement. The “C” (2 points) grade indicates satisfactory work – work that demonstrates technical, creative and critical competence. It reflects regular attendance, continuing improvement and successful accomplishment of course objectives. The “D” (1 point) grade indicates marginal competence in most or all areas of course study. Instructor may also award the “D” grade to students who demonstrate minor academic deficiencies. The “D” grade is not a substitute for the “F” grade and will be awarded only to students whose work indicates that they are prepared to advance to the next level of course work. The “F’ (0 point) grade indicates unsatisfactory quality and/or quantity of work.

Attendance: Attendance during scheduled class time is required. More than three unexcused absences will result in a letter grade reduction of your overall grade. Late projects will not be accepted.

Time Investment: Study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours for class contact in lectures, for laboratories, examinations, tutorials and recitations, and for preparation and study; or a demonstration by the student of learning equivalent to that established as the expected product of such a period of study. (UWM FD 2838).

Reference Books
Disciplines, definitions and debates
The first section introduces students to multiple approaches towards the study of material and cultural landscapes in cities. Throughout this course students are encouraged to trace the genealogical origins of their weekly readings within four traditions of historical inquiry — material culture, public history, environmental history, and cultural landscape history. It is necessary to recognize these four areas of historical inquiry and use this knowledge to frame our scholarship of the social, political and material world.

Workshops: Workshops will focus on some basic research questions: how to read scholarly articles, how to identify disciplinary texts, how a bibliography can be read as a genealogy, how to write scholarly papers; how to cite sources, and how to evaluate sources.

Assignments: Short assignment will help students identify a site and subject for their term project.

Jan 24, 2018, Week 1
Topic: Introduction
Readings to complete before first day of classes

Workshop: How to read scholarly articles and identify disciplinary texts
http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf

January 31, 2018, Week 2
Topic: Four Historical Traditions
Workshop: How to find sources.

Assignment 1: Literature Survey Assignment handed out.

February 7, 2018, Week 3
Topic: Reading Cities

Workshop: How to cite and evaluate sources.

February 14, 2018, Week 4
Topic: Reading Cultural Landscapes

Workshop: How to identify a research topic.

Assignment 2: One page case study suggestion for term project. Identify 1) location, and 2) reasons for choice. Explain how your project addresses environmental justice by aligning your work with one of the following issues: 1. Food Justice, 2. Health Justice, 3. Climate Justice, or 4. Housing Justice. For general history of Milwaukee see, John Gurda, The Making of Milwaukee,
February 21, 2018, Week 5

Topic: Environmental Justice and Cities I. Case Study.


Student presentations
Ref: Landscape Architecture Magazine: landscapearchitecturemagazine.org
National Trust for Historic Preservation blog: http://forum.savingplaces.org/connect/blogs
Places Journal: https://placesjournal.org
American Society of Landscape Architects: ASLA.org
Environmental Justice / Environmental Racism: http://www.ejnet.org/ej/
American Planning Association: https://www.planning.org/knowledgecenter/

Workshop: How to write a thesis statement and relate it to secondary scholarship.

February 28, 2018, Week 6


Student presentations.
Ref: Landscape Architecture Magazine: landscapearchitecturemagazine.org
National Trust for Historic Preservation blog: http://forum.savingplaces.org/connect/blogs
Places Journal: https://placesjournal.org
American Society of Landscape Architects: ASLA.org
Environmental Justice / Environmental Racism: http://www.ejnet.org/ej/
American Planning Association: https://www.planning.org/knowledgecenter/

Workshop: How to construct a scholarly argument.
March 7, 2018, Week 7

**Topic: Environmental Justice and Cities III. Access**


Student presentations.

Ref: Landscape Architecture Magazine: landscapearchitecturemagazine.org
National Trust for Historic Preservation blog: http://forum.savingplaces.org/connect/blogs
Places Journal: https://placesjournal.org
American Society of Landscape Architects: ASLA.org
Environmental Justice / Environmental Racism: http://www.ejnet.org/ej/
American Planning Association: https://www.planning.org/knowledgecenter/

March 14, 2018, Week 8

**Topic: Environmental Justice and Cities III. Health**


Student presentations.

Ref: Landscape Architecture Magazine: landscapearchitecturemagazine.org
National Trust for Historic Preservation blog: http://forum.savingplaces.org/connect/blogs
Places Journal: https://placesjournal.org
American Society of Landscape Architects: ASLA.org
Environmental Justice / Environmental Racism: http://www.ejnet.org/ej/
American Planning Association: https://www.planning.org/knowledgecenter/

March 21, 2018, Week 9

SPRING RECESS
Part II: Telling stories
This part of the semester we will examine themes that frame the scholarship of environmental justice as it relates to the built environment. The stories you will encounter are not new, but these examples reframe the old narratives in new ways.

Workshops: During this period workshops will focus on writing your term paper.
Assignments: Short assignments will focus on planning and presenting your final paper.

March 28, 2018, Week 10
Topic: Data Analysis Workshop

Workshop: Having fun with data collection and analysis. Bring collected data to class.

For spatial data
https://webapps.cityofchicago.org/landmarksweb/static/pdf/Your_House_Has_A_History.pdf

For ethnographic data

For aggregate data
https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml
Archival Research Resources Online
1. Property Information; Green Infrastructure; GIS data, Census 2010; MPROP, legal descriptions, SIC codes, and tax data:
   http://city.milwaukee.gov/mapmilwaukee/applications#.U5ZwMBbWdG4
2. Old Map Milwaukee: Multiple layers with various information:
   http://city.milwaukee.gov/MapMilwaukee3480.htm#.U5ZwHhbWdG5
   http://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/ (You will need to have an UWM email ID or access from UWM libraries)
5. Wisconsin Historical Society: http://www.wisconsinhistory.org
   http://old.mpl.org/file/digital_historicphoto_index.htm
7. UWM Library Image Archives:
   http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/mkenh
Assignment 3: In one page describe 1) list of data you collected.

Aggregate data: Census data, manuscript census schedules (available up through 1930), probate records, immigration and naturalization records, vital records (birth, marriage, divorce, death).

Spatial data: Plans, city directories, maps (such as plat maps, city and neighborhood maps, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps), objects, building and occupancy permits, deeds, tax records, photographs and other visual records.

Ethnographic data: newspapers, diaries, and written records.

April 4, 2018, Week 11

Telling Stories: Law and Practice


Workshop: Evaluating your research paper.


April 11, 2018, Week 12

Telling Stories: River and Water


https://www.americanrivers.org/rivers/

Workshop: Do you have a warrant? How do you use your warrant to revise your paper?


April 18, 2018, Week 13
[SAH Conference] Guest instructor

**Telling Stories: Prison and Power**


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**April 25, 2018, Week 14**

**Telling Stories: Home and Property**


**Workshop:** Drafting your paper.


**Assignment 4:** First full draft of your paper

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**May 2, 2018, Week 15**

[VAF Conference]

Student Preparation. No class.

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**May 9, 2018, Week 16**

**Topic:** Student Conference

This final week event will involve students identifying and planning roundtable discussions based on common interests, projects, questions, and resources developed over the semester. This day will be a festive occasion to look back at what we accomplished this semester and what we didn’t.

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**Bibliography: Works of interest.**

**Movies/documentaries you should see.**

- *Sin Nombre*
- *Last train home*
- *Men with guns*
- *Winters bone*
- *Mudbound*
- *Beasts of the Southern Wild*
- *Detropia*
- *A Place at the Table*
- *Sustainable Agriculture: Where Do We Go from Here?*
- *Fast Food Nation*
- *A Farmer in Africa: Property Rights*
- *The Garden*

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**Theoretical**


**Cultural Landscapes, American landscape studies**


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**Environmental justice, climate justice, environmentalism**


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**Material Culture Studies, historical archaeology, built environment**


Dell Upton, “Towards a Performance Theory of Vernacular Architecture in Tidewater Virginia,”


Ian Hodder and Scott Hutson, Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).


Environmental History


Carolyn Merchant, Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England (Chapel Hill:


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**Public history, local history, ethnic history, women’s history**


Thomas Bender, Community and Social Change in America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
Policies

University Policies
Students with disabilities. Notice to these students should appear prominently in the syllabus so that special accommodations are provided in a timely manner. http://www4.uwm.edu/arc

Religious observances. Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

Students called to active military duty. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted. Students: http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm. Employees: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S40.htm

Incompletes. A notation of “incomplete” may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student’s control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf

Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminatory_Policy.pdf

Academic misconduct. Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/

Complaint procedures. Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminatory_Policy.pdf

Grade appeal procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm

The final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, etc. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm